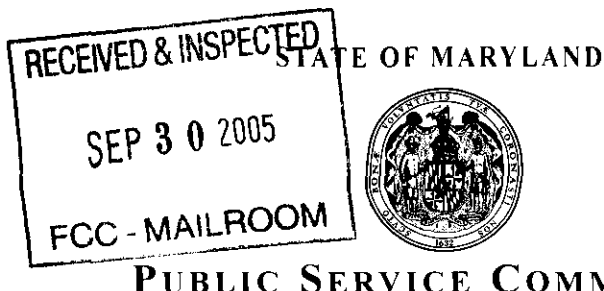


ROBERT L. EHRLICH, JR.
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL S. STEELE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



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September 26, 2005

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Marlene H. Dortch
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 - 12th Street, SW, Room TW-A306
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Rate Comparability Certification—Order on Remand, Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, and Memorandum Opinion and Order, released on October 27, 2003 - CC Docket No. 96-45, FCC 03-249

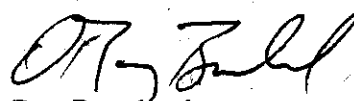
Dear Ms. Dortch:

The Public Service Commission of Maryland hereby certifies that the residential telephone rates charged for service prior to July 1, 2005 in the rural areas of Maryland are comparable to urban rates nationwide and therefore are in compliance with §54.316.

Part 54 of the Code of Federal Regulations states that "a state may presume that the residential rates in rural areas served by non-rural incumbent local exchange carriers are reasonably comparable to urban rates nationwide if the rates are below the nationwide urban rate benchmark." See 47 C.F.R. §54.316(b).

The nationwide urban benchmark rate for purposes of implementing 47C.F.R. §54.316(b) is \$34.21. The comparable residential rates for Verizon Maryland, Inc., the only non-rural incumbent local exchange carrier in Maryland, are significantly less than the urban benchmark rate. Consequently, the residential local exchange rates charged in all rural areas of the State by Verizon Maryland, Inc. are comparable to the nationwide urban benchmark rates pursuant to 47 C.F.R. §54.316(b).

By Direction of the Commission,


O. Ray Bourland
Executive Secretary

ORB:ivs

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